

THE AMERICAN

RATIONALIST

July, 1956

VOL. I • No. 2

FOR POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY is best expressed by Alexander Pope in his "Essay on Man":
know then thyself. Presume not God to scan, the proper study of mankind is man."

NEGATIVELY, we stand with Jefferson, eternally hostile to all forms of tyranny over the
rights of men.

The Secular Menace

by Edna Riley

On God's Coattails

by Sam Dicks

Life with a Purpose

by Lord Chorley

This I Believe

by Oscar Riddle

Do You Worry?

by Ralph L. Goggin

Inherit the Wind

by Florence Van Swearengen



"My religion . . . honesty, and integrity of mind."

an Editorial Addressed to All Protestants

A Magazine for the Entire Rationalist Movement

35c

NEWS OF THE MOVEMENT... BOOKS... COMMENTS

GREETINGS to the

American Rationalist

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the pic on the cover

THIS STATUE IN DOUGLAS Park, Chicago, commemorates the Bohemian national hero, Karel Havlicek Borovsky, the foremost Czech Rationalist of his day. July 29th is the 100th anniversary of his death.

The Czech community of Chicago meets yearly at the foot of the statue to do honor to his memory. He was a Czech patriot whose religion was honesty, and integrity of mind.

'The Secular Menace'

Some Words of Counsel to Those
Who Denounce Non-Church People

By EDNA RILEY

Whenever virtue becomes incarnate in an individual, a group, or nation, melodrama portends; and the plot calls inevitably for an indispensable ingredient, a villain, or, as they term it in Hollywood, a "Menace." How would Hitler have projected his own God-like essence and the divinity of the master race without the contrast of a foil of Satanic evil, a dragon to be slain by the hero? And so, for his Menace, he conjured up an all-powerful, world-dominating, baby-eating Jew.

Here in America we have had, and still have, our own manifestations of virtue incarnate. These heroes, too, have tilted at the Menace materialized by the master race, the Jew, and have included the Negro and the "Red" to build up a composite villain of most fearsome mein.

But of late there are indications that there is to be a change in the cast; a new villain is being groomed as Menace, either to replace or to augment the Negro, the Red and the Jew. Let me introduce to you this new actor in their morality play of Good and Evil: Ladies and gentlemen, the Secular Menace.

Although he is not by any means the first to invoke this monster, Dr. Harold E. Fey, associate editor of *The Christian Century*, has pictured it so chillingly and has sounded the clarion call to arms to war against it with such vigor that I shall quote from an address which he delivered at a Conference of Congregational Christian Churches in Cincinnati in which he cried: "It is time that the world recognized religion as the conscience of society," and declared that "religion has to enter the struggle as to who will control the Soul of the State."

Dr. Fey went on to say, "We must remember that half of the people in the United States are not affiliated with any religion. The negative attitude of this part of the population is a positive threat. We know that those groups of persons who have adopted the foreign and un-American philosophies of living are made up

in part by those who constitute the secular part of the population. In days to come, the advocates of secularism will constitute a menace (*Ah, there! ER*) to America, since the nation will be going through a period of transition . . . Desolation of much of the Christian world is under the shadow created by secularism."

Well, there you have it. In Dr. Fey's melodrama "religion" is to be cast as "the conscience of society." Virtue incarnate. The Menace, with whom this hero is to struggle "to control the soul of the state" is secularism. And, in the synopsis secularism looks bad: very wicked indeed. A Menace if there ever was one. So let's see. While secularism marches proudly over to stand with the Negro, the "communist," and the Jew in the line-up of propaganda villains, let's have a look at these people "not affiliated with any religion," (by which Dr. Fey no doubt means, not members of any organized church) who constitute this secular menace.

First, let's call in a character witness, Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. In a recent public address, Mr. Rockefeller had this to say: "Millions of men and women are exemplifying in their daily lives in the most common-place manner, unselfishness, generosity, loyalty, self-sacrifice and other characteristics and qualities which command the admiration of the world. Yet many of them have no church affiliations; theirs is fundamentally a religion of deeds, not of creeds, expressed in life, not words."

This was a tribute to the "secular" people in war. Perhaps it will suffice to say of them in peace that for the 150 years of the rule of the majority in American democracy, when the majority has always been secular, all churches, all creeds, all religions in America have been safe and free. Nor is it they, at this moment, who are starting this "struggle for the control of the soul of the state."

It is, by the way, this flamboyant phrase that makes it seem advisable to answer this particular attack on "the secular menace." "Religion, the conscience of society, struggling to control the soul of the state" is certainly a honey. As a fascist slogan Joseph Goebbels himself

could not have done better. And the idea it expresses, of a group or combination of groups functioning as "the conscience of society in control of the soul of the state" is a thoroughly fascist concept. It is the gateway to the road that has ever led and will always ultimately lead to some version of Belden, Buchenwald and Dachau. It is the exact opposite of the secular idea that the conscience of every individual member of the state is in the keeping of that particular individual; and that each individual thus makes his contribution to the conscience of the state.

In electing "religion" to be the "conscience of society," Dr. Fey has not been clear as to what he means by "religion." If he means, as would appear from his statement, the organized churches, surely he must appreciate the difficulties in the way of arriving at a concrete expression of this state conscience. He must know that many people of many minds have what they regard as a claim on "religion," some of them actually claiming to hold a monopoly of "religion." He will find, beyond doubt, millions of sensible church people who will decline to join him in his "struggle to control the soul of the state," but he will also find kindred souls. The Rev. Father Coughlin, for instance, speaks for "religion," as does the Rev. Gerald L. K. Smith. Both of these gentlemen would, no doubt, agree enthusiastically that "religion should control the soul of the state;" the idea ties in neatly with their Christian Front and Christian Mobilizer programs. Boiled down, it is, in fact, the same program. Both of these gentlemen, too, are experts on what Dr. Fey calls "foreign and un-American philosophies of living." And they are avowed enemies of what they call "atheists" and "pagans," fiends easily identifiable with Dr. Fey's "secular menace." Since they agree, then, on so many points, can it be that Dr. Fey will make common cause with these worthies?

But let us suppose that the "secular menace" instead of being stubborn and fighting to the end like a tenacious Jap, sees the error of its ways, and, in a starry-eyed resolve to be Good, decides to "get religion." And, to avoid the division into denominations which Dr. Fey deplores, let us suppose they all elect to join, say, The Methodist Church. The influx of seventy

million people, added to its present membership, would make The Methodist Church pretty powerful. Or suppose they decided to move *en masse* into the Roman Catholic Church. Seventy millions added to the twenty-two millions now claimed by the Catholics would give them a membership of ninety-odd millions of the 130 million population.

Dr. Fey's concern, in using his rule of religion, is for American as against un-American philosophies. The American philosophy, as it is generally understood, is clearly set forth in our Constitution, freedom of speech and freedom of religion being cardinal points in that philosophy. Does Dr. Fey really believe that this philosophy would flourish in a more favorable climate if this hegira of the secular people into the Methodist or the Catholic or any other sectarian fold should actually occur? It seems far more likely that the freedom of religion we have enjoyed in America is due to the fact that we have so large a secular population, and that the secular people, far from being a threat, have been the bulwark of the American philosophy of life.

"Desolation of much of the Christian world," then sighs Dr. Fey, "is under the shadow created by secularism." But it might be well to remind him and the world that this desolation was called into being by the chimes of Christian bells: the bells of the churches of Italy which summoned the legions of Mussolini to the rape of Abyssinia. Secularism, the secularism of America, or England, of France and of Russia, has been in the forefront of the defense of the free Christian world, whose desolation it most certainly did not initiate, and whose destruction it mourns.

Viewed, then, in a less melodramatic light, do secularism and the secular people seem to be the Menace they have been pictured? Rather, is not secularism seen to be what it really is: the basic freedom of all religious freedoms, the right not to belong to any church. Take that right away and what have you? Compulsory religion, of course. Is that what Dr. Fey wants? And under closer examination do not the secular people appear in their proper light: as perfectly decent people whose crime is that they have found nothing

Continued on page 12

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an editorial...

Dedicated with Goodwill

To all Protestants:—

Let us emphasize first of all, that the true Rationalist has no animus against Protestants as such for the very simple reason that we, ourselves, are also protestants—with a small “p”. It is true that we are competitors in the free market of ideas but, nevertheless, we are quite willing to cooperate with Protestants in all matters involving our common interests. The fact is that, basically, we have many interests in common for we too are dedicated to the enrichment and ennoblement of human life.

So dedicated, however, we deeply resent being made the whipping boy for the clergy, among them some Protestants who, in their blindness, characterize all those who do not believe in supernaturalism as worthless individuals devoid of morals, character and integrity. Because we do not accept their religious concepts, they even blame us for the rising tide of adult and juvenile delinquency. They make of us a bogey which they have conjured from out of their imagination, calling it “godless materialism” or that old debbil, “secularism” — as if we did not have as high ideals as any of them.

We can only refer them to the words of the Nazarene, “forgive them for they know not what they do.”

The Protestant movement originated as a natural rebellion against the iron-handed tyranny over the minds of men which the Roman church had maintained for centuries in collaboration with the princes of Europe. The sole motive behind this tyranny was the maintenance of an unquestioning obedience to the Papacy and to the princes of the day without the slightest regard for the material well-being of the common man.

Men of independent mind no longer could tolerate the corruption in the papal regime of those days, its resistance to change in a changing world, nor its stubborn refusal to renounce its bogus claim to supreme authority over all the affairs of men—a claim upon which it insists even unto this day.

The first grave error of the Reformation was that, aside from its repudiation of the papal authority, Protestant leaders actually took over the creed and doctrines of the Roman

church with little essential change except for a limited freedom of interpretation which they reserved for the individual.

Nevertheless, stimulated by this limited freedom, 250 sects have sprung up meanwhile with an equal number of differing interpretations of the so-called "Christian" doctrine. However, these varying doctrines gradually have been frozen into a general overall pattern of Protestant orthodoxy which it is deemed heretical to question. The Protestant clergy—self-styled "Men of God"—still arrogate to themselves the right to say what is "true" Christian religion and what is heresy even though there is no agreement among themselves.

The second grave error of the Reformation lay in its leaders' failure, then or thereafter, to make a complete reappraisal of the tenets upon which the Christian religion was based. Unfortunately, the suppression of free thought under the blighting tyranny of the Roman church had been so completely effective that the intellectual level of the 1500's in the matter of religion was little, if any, above that of the year 325 when, at Nicaea in Greece, the so-called Apostle's Creed with all its fantasies came into being. The men at the Council of Nicaea were steeped in the ignorance, the superstitions, and the childish credulity of their time, and it seems ridiculous to Rationalists that even today their pronouncements should be considered sacrosanct and, therefore not subject to re-examination and constructive criticism. The same suppression of free thought which prevented any advance in religious thinking from the crude fantasies of the year 325 also prevented any considerable developments in the field of science. Copernicus and Galileo dared maintain that the earth was not the center of all things but a planet traveling an orbit around the sun. Because this contradicted biblical teachings they both suffered extremes of persecution and torture by the Inquisition. The thousand years of cultivated ignorance known as the Dark Ages brought the world little semblance of civilization.

It was not until Luther's rebellion brought a partial freeing of the human mind from clerical domination that some traces of modern civilization began to appear. Incomplete as it was, the world is much indebted to Martin Luther and the Protestant leaders that came after him for this partial release from the bondage which made development of a real civilization next to impossible.

These early traces of civilization have developed at a constantly accelerating pace as, little by little, people have freed themselves from the spell of supernaturally based religion. This development has all taken place in the countries

Allies Among the Clergy!

EVER-QUESTIONING FAITH

TO THE EDITOR: Your comments on the Christianity issue of *Life* Magazine (*The Reporter* Notes, January 12) were a breath of fresh air. I particularly applauded your comment that you missed the note of an "ever-questioning faith." A lot of us who belong to the "lost tribe" of religious liberals miss that note, not only in *Life* but in most religious periodicals as well.

As you are probably aware, the viewpoint known as "neo-orthodoxy," or "neo-Protestantism," pretty much dominates the Protestant theological scene today, along with the church-conscious thinking fostered by the ecumenical movement. The voice of the "ever-questioning" liberal is no longer heard in our seminaries or in the religious press. The fact that such a distinguished liberal scholar and writer as Von Ogden Vogt, for example, is denied access to leading religious journals indicates how heavy the blanket of censorship is.

Those of us who believe that a rigorous search for truth is a religious obligation, and who are trying to articulate a faith that transcends the provincialism of any one creed or tradition, are in a trying position. We feel isolated and lonely. You would be doing us liberals a great favor, and perhaps also rendering an important public service, if you could publish an article now and then by a religious liberal. Where else can we turn except to "secular" magazines such as yours?

First Congregational Church
Rev. Thomas S. Vernon
Bay City, Michigan

—*"The Reporter"*, Feb. 9, 1956.

* * *

RELIGION AND THE B.B.C.

SIR, — As a working parson, may I strongly support the plea in Mr. Burnet's letter? For one thing, I believe that Christianity can stand on its own feet. Equal-

ly, despite the outbursts over Mrs. Knight's broadcasts, it is clear that there exists today a solid well-grounded outlook, which can be broadly described as Scientific Humanism. It has its own discipline; basically, it has an integrity of mind in the search for truth which Christians should be the first to welcome and respect. It may not, as we think, undermine our central dogmas; it has unquestionably helped in forming the present outlook of Christians and non-Christians alike, and it will continue to do so. I venture the hope that Christians will not feel bound to the attitude "either-or"; may not our own ability to give depend still on our willingness to be learners, i.e., disciples? Today's problems are not of simple unbelief; their solution is not by "looking back."

5 Queens Road, T. J. Foinette
Lipson, Plymouth.
—"New Statesman and Nation"

sirs:
"Man Inherits the Earth" is undiluted hogwash and buncombe. The true answer to how man became human is found in Genesis 2:7: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Somebody will roast in hell for that article.

Raymond L. Cox, Th.D.
Pastor

oursquare Church
orvallis, Ore.—from "Life"

THE LIBERAL

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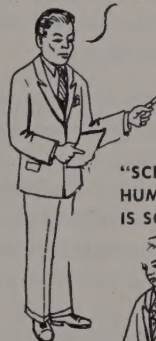
freed from the Roman yoke and precious little of it has rubbed off on those still under that yoke.

At the beginning of this editorial, we stated that Rationalists also are protestants—with a small "p." Our protest is against the idea that the fantastic concepts of religion born out of the crude thinking of the 300's should be entitled to any special consideration in the 1900's just because they are ancient. The layman's right to think for himself in the

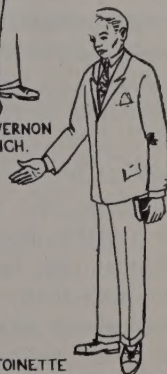


**WELCOME to Our
Rationalist
Fellowship
(Without Ordination)**

"RELIGION IS AN
EVER QUESTIONING FAITH"



"SCIENTIFIC
HUMANISM
IS SOUND"



**These Are Men
Of Distinction But,
More Important, Men
Of Courage.**

field of religion has been denied him consistently: the clergy always have insisted that religion was their exclusive concern. Thus, in religion, the fourth century has been able to intrude itself upon the twentieth. In other fields not denied to him, it has been a different story. Released from the church domination of Galileo's time, the pseudo-sciences of alchemy and astrology, both full of equally crude and imaginative con-

cepts, have been cleansed of their mythology and developed into today's exact sciences of chemistry and astronomy. We Rationalists have undertaken the task of doing the same for the other pseudo-science—theology.

We Rationalists recognize that, pervading this great Cosmos of which we are a part, is a Something. It is infinitely greater than ourselves or of anything we are capable of even imagining. Nevertheless, we cannot give it a name nor catalog its attributes. We cannot worship it because worship is a fear reaction—and we are not afraid. We cannot pray to it for added powers, for we believe it to be distinctly impersonal and therefore without ears to hear. Furthermore, we believe that we were born with all the potentialities we ever will have.

This last paragraph explains why we carry on the cover of this magazine the verse from Alexander Pope's "Essay On Man:"

"Know then thyself.

Presume not God to scan.

The proper study of mankind

Is Man!"

We believe that the morals and ethical principles which society has developed to govern our personal conduct and and our relations with our fellows have all been wrought out of the hard realities of human experience. They have no particular relation to any so-called inspired writings nor to specific personalities except as these writings or personalities have succeeded in putting into words and codifying the conclusions men had already arrived at as they considered the conditions of their time.

We view life with reverence and treasure it as a precious gift not to be wasted nor degraded and we accept its responsibilities. We have within us an urge to leave our Earth a better place because of our stay upon it. We can satisfy that urge by putting into every human relationship a little more than we expect to take out.

We leave it to you to do what the early Protestants failed to do—to re-appraise the basis of the Protestant faith and bring it into the field of reality. This done, you will find yourself a Rationalist!

As such you also will find yourself among the foremost scientists, philosophers, and educators of our time. A few even among the clergy have found the courage to stand up and be counted. The Bishop of Birmingham (Church of England) in a book published in 1947 said the Virgin Birth is "a crude semi-pagan story . . . miracles do not happen,"

What's Your Problem?

Publications of large circulation have a call for answers to personal, marital and family problems through their columns. No doubt Rationalists have these problems too and would prefer Rationalist answers over those of Dr. Peale. Send them in. There will be a column for them under the heading, "WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?"

FORGIVE AND FORGET.—In the announcement of the revival at the Church of the Brethren, made in *The Herald* last week, the linotype spoiled a perfectly good compliment by misplacing one letter. The sentence should have read: "He believes in a happy religion and lives it." But the linotype made it "He believes sin a happy religion and lives it." Can an apology ever fix it?—*Sabetha (Kans.) Herald.*

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CHRISTIAN BLUMENTHAL

On April 19, 1956, death came to the oldest member of the Rationalist Society of St. Louis, and a guarantor of Rationalist Publications, publisher of The American Rationalist.

Christ was born on April 30, 1870, in Kyritz, Brandenburg, near Berlin where his father worked on the estate of a junker



Christ Blumenthal, cutting his birthday cake at a party given for him last year by the Rationalist Society of St. Louis.

for 30 Thaler a year. His master was hard to please and made life miserable for Christ who more than once wanted to run away. But he persisted in his work as a journeyman and learned the cabinet maker and wagon makers' trade. Many years later he and his wife visited his old master who apologized for having been such a hard taskmaster.

In Berlin he joined his trade union and also the growing political labor movement. Bismarck, the Iron Chancellor, tried to stem the tide of a politically conscious labor party by invoking the so-called exception laws which drove many prominent so-

and Baptism effects "no regeneration from sin". The Archbishop of York also recently questioned the inspiration of the Bible, the Virgin Birth, and the physical resurrection of Jesus.

Join the protestants with a small "p"! Come into the world of religious realism. It has its problems also but it opens up vast possibilities for zestful adventure in the realm of the free mind.

(Ed. Note: Why not show this to your Protestant friends?)

DO YOU WORRY?

By RALPH L. GOGGIN

Most of us worry at some time or another. It is a very common and a most undesirable human trait. We say *human* because it is apparent that animals do not worry. They live only in the present. The trouble with us is that we live too much in the past and in the future, but not enough in the present. A moment's reflection will show us how senseless this is, when we realize that only the present has any existence. The past is gone beyond recall, and nothing in it can be changed. The future is never here. We can lay plans and do things now that will affect the future, but no amount of anxiety will make the future better than it is when it has become the present. Worry about the past and the future only serves to make the present miserable. The present is all we have, so we should make the most of it.

If we keep ourselves occupied now, in the present, we will have no time for worry. If you have work to do, keep your mind on it and do it the best you can. If you are playing, concentrate on that and get the most possible enjoyment from it. If you are resting, relax completely, both body and mind. If you will do these things, you will be unable to worry. Perhaps the most difficult is to relax. If we are working or playing, our minds focus on that activity. However, when we stop to rest, or when we go to bed at night, our minds become occupied with thinking, and our thoughts make their greatest impression upon us. The nature of those thoughts will be according to our thinking habits and the control we have over our thoughts.

Controlled thinking is the answer to the worry problem. We can make our thoughts what we will, but we must have the will to do so. Bad thinking habits of long standing cannot be overcome instantly. It took time to form them; therefore it will take time to overcome them. Just as two objects cannot occupy a space at the same time, neither can two thoughts occupy the mind at once. If you find an undesirable negative thought occupying your mind, push it out with a desirable positive thought. If the negative thought persists

in attempting to come back into the mind, persist in pushing it back with the positive thought. The positive will eventually win over the negative.

You are the master of your thoughts; do not become a slave to them. Use your will. Decide for yourself that you will entertain only positive thinking in your mind. Your thinking is what you make it, and your thinking determines your welfare, your happiness, and your accomplishments. After a time, the habit of thinking negative thoughts will be replaced by the habit of thinking positive thoughts. Positive thinking will become natural and automatic. If there are times when you catch yourself backsliding into the old habit, you must assert your will again.

Worrying is a destructive habit. It never changes anything. It hinders. It keeps a person from doing his best. Worry wastes valuable energy, which could be used constructively. Worry depresses one and makes him become fatigued, both mentally and physically. It can drive one to distraction, make him neurotic or a hypochondriac, or may even cause him to become mentally ill. It also enervates his physical being.

Riddance of the worry habit gives one more serenity and greater peace of mind; he finds life more worth living; he feels joy and happiness in his heart that he did not know before; he is more healthy; he has more energy and a greater clearness of mind to do more than he is able when he is hampered by worry.

If you would enjoy a fully satisfactory life, you must overcome the worry habit. If you follow the method we have given, you will not fail. Many others have done it, and so can you. However, no one else can do it for you. You must will to do it yourself, and not give up to the worry habit, but exercise your will until you have established control over your thoughts and have become their master.

You have never gained anything by worrying, and never will. You can only lose. Why not resolve right now to enrich your life, and begin to act upon your resolution without delay?

cial democrats in hiding or exile. But after a short time, Bismarck realized that his laws helped the development and growth of the labor movement and did not present them to his subservient parliament for renewal. On the day the exception laws expired, the Social Democrats staged huge victory meetings all over Germany and Christ used to tell of his attendance of these meetings and of the tremendous enthusiasm of the people. It was Bismarck's worst defeat.

Christ had seen in Prussia the close connection between throne and altar and became a Free-thinker early in life. He remained a liberal in politics and "Weltanschauung" all his life.

The Blumenthals operated a combination business, his wife running a milk station on the first floor and Christ operating a cabinet shop in the basement. He brought his family to America, coming direct to St. Louis and arriving on July 3, 1899. He became a citizen seven years later.

After a few years working as a cabinet maker he went into the construction business. He joined the Herwegh Singing Society and the Freie Gemeinde around 1903.

His only surviving child, Clarence, now living in New Mexico, attended the German classes held by the Freie Gemeinde. He had attended the Chicago conference in which the American Rationalist Federation was formed, and was the most active member of the organizations he belonged to. Rationalist funeral services were conducted by Eugene Hoffman with cremation at Missouri Crematory.

GREETINGS to the *American Rationalist*

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On God's Coattails

By Sam Dicks

One Sunday in 1952 a black limousine drove up to the main entrance of a prominent metropolitan church and a renowned leader and his wife stepped out as flash-bulbs went off and crowds gathered.

Presidential-candidate Eisenhower led the way to a new emphasis in our national religious life.

Not only did Mr. Eisenhower join a church upon his entry into politics but in order to show the world that the leader of our nation is a crusading Christian, he became the first president in history who prayed publicly at his inauguration, began cabinet meetings with prayer and refers to the Deity in practically every speech he delivers.

Following Eisenhower's leadership are many other examples of this new emphasis in religion. It is now required that when our thousands of school children recite the pledge of allegiance to the flag, they insert the words "under God", although this was not deemed necessary by the minister who wrote the pledge of allegiance many years ago.

We have seen the placing of "In God We Trust" on our postage stamps, as well as our letters being cancelled with such slogans as "Pray for Peace."

Our Congressmen now have a prayer room in the Capitol for the first time since the founding of the Republic.

As we examine these and other examples more closely, however, we wonder if perhaps this religious movement is, in most instances, being used by insincere politicians.

In spite of a prayerful administration, government concern for world needs have not increased appreciably and although our congressmen now have a prayer room they still seem to be as sensitive to gas lobbyists as to God.

Of course some of our politicians are sincere Christians, but it seems strange to hear practically every leader in both parties become so concerned with our religious life. Is it possible that they are ballot-box Christians or as the *Christian Century* puts it "trying to ride on God's coattails?"

One of the most common charges heard against Communism today is that it is atheistic. Can it be that since our politicians and we, ourselves, are opposed to communism, we also, in our desperate search for world peace, oppose atheism and religious non-conformity as un-American. The *Reporter* tells us that America is eagerly seeking for a faith to match the communists.

A couple of years ago one over-zealous senator proposed an amendment to the Constitution which read:

"This nation devoutly recognizes the authority and law of Jesus Christ, Saviour and Ruler of Nations, through whom are bestowed the blessings of Almighty God."

The "under God" addition to the pledge of allegiance only took us back to the theocracy of the Middle Ages but Senator Charles Tobey, who died before he pressed for passage of his proposed amendment, was imitating the 4th century Roman emperor, Constantine, who first made Christian orthodoxy the prerequisite for citizenship.

In trying to show the world that we are Christian we are committing the folly of confusing Christianity as Constantine did with patriotism.

I want to make it clear, however, that I am not questioning the sincerity of President Eisenhower, or any other one person; but it does look strange, when, as it becomes politically advantageous, we see everyone suddenly jump on the Christian bandwagon and become, at least outwardly, concerned with our nation's spiritual life.

Many feel that Mr. Eisenhower is a towering patriot because his picture is in our newspapers attending church every Sunday morning—we fail to remember that two of our greatest presidents, Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, rarely attended church at all and held extremely unorthodox religious views.

If either were president today is it possible that we would consider him unpatriotic and suspect him of being an atheist—and perhaps, a communist sympathizer?

We would, indeed, under our present standards, question the loyalty of many of our great Americans who were more interested in high values and ideals than good public relations.

Quoting an editorial in the liberal Catholic magazine, *Commonweal*, entitled "Religion and Patriotism:"

"We doubt that Americanism has anything essential to do with religion; a good citizen may be a pagan, an agnostic, or an atheist. We also doubt that religion has anything essential to do with Americanism; a saint may be an anarchist."

In another editorial, *Commonweal*, pointed out that many non-Christian Americans were the leaders in opposing Coughlinism and McCarthyism and were more devoted to democracy than many Christians who reconciled themselves with these twin evils.

Yet many politicians go to great lengths to prove that God is on their side. However, in spite of the fact that this might upset some people in Vermont and South Dakota, I doubt seriously if God is a Republican, and the Solid South may not believe this, but it is even highly questionable if He is registered as a Democrat. Nor is He an America-Firster.

Do not misunderstand what I am trying to say: the church and state should remain friends and Christians should continually assert spiritual values in the political world. But the religious and political orders must be kept separate and their functions not confused, for from such confusion some of the worst tragedies in our world's sad history have ensued.

This problem comes into the clearest focus when it is related to our concern for world peace. The United States appears to feel that a combined church-state movement is the answer to the "atheistic communism."

The United States is not content with guiding every Jew, Gentile and non-believer in our own land to Christianity for the government has appointed Dr. Elton Trueblood, a prominent clergyman, as chief of religious policy for the United States Information Agency.

According to this title the U.S. now has a religious policy—Christianity as interpreted by Dr. Trueblood.

In his first public speech in Washington, he announced a plan that he was going to launch around the world, that of giving every human the right to be a "card-carrying Christian." His membership card, produced at the first meeting, proves among other things that the

card-carrying member has taken an oath saying that "he is willing to wear Christ's Yoke."

Imagine the effects of this attempt to impose Christianity on Hindus, Moslems, Buddhists, or Confucians, when Dr. Trueblood gives the world the one true faith!

In the words of Agnes Meyer: "We shall be advertising ourselves as religious adolescents in the eyes of the whole world."

This zealot should be retired before he makes Christianity, our nation and our democratic ideals ridiculous and before he ruins what good relations we still have with the other free nations.

Quoting the *Christian Century* "true religion is not served in such performances and honest politics does not require them."

The frenzy of Americans to legislate a hollow form of Christianity into people's consciousness, both home and abroad, will do more harm to Christianity than the tyranny of Communism.

We cannot show the world that we are better than the Communists by rewriting our pledge of allegiance or our postage stamps.

If communism has been temporarily checked it is due not to our religious exhortation but to such undertakings as the Marshall Plan and

"The Secular Menace"

Continued from page 4

to meet their religious needs in what the organized churches have had to offer.

At a time like this, a time in history unprecedented in its need for light, for intelligence and understanding, for the honest co-operation of all people in undertaking its overwhelming problems, it is difficult indeed to understand the kind of people, church people calling themselves religious, who are using their time and energy in trying to create a bug-a-boo out of their non-church (secular) neighbors.

If this attack of Dr. Fey's stood alone it might not seem important. But others have been voicing the same foolish cry, the same call to arms is increasingly sounding. What are these people thinking of? What are they trying to do?

Can it be that they are a menace?

**This article was reprinted from the March 15, 1951 issue of The Churchman*

the Point IV program—"two of the most altruistic examples of democracy's sense of moral responsibility."

Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount, "By their fruits ye shall know them." So it is that if we can show the world and ourselves that the ideals of freedom—of democracy, of active concern for the welfare of our brothers—for the welfare of all mankind really exist, we will have won the battle against communism.

Let us live a life filled with concern for the suffering peoples of the world, and with work and aid to alleviate that suffering and we will establish a really peaceful world.

Let's quit preaching a conformist type of Christianity and begin practicing a higher way of life.

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This I Believe

By OSCAR RIDDLE

I believe in an orderly universe—uncomplicated by a Supreme Being—within which Earth has already begun to sprout superior persons and peoples. I regard it as a certainty that most of present human superiority over nearest animal kin has been attained through the social relations of men. I believe that this means that persons are more important than things, that shared ideas have unrivalled lifting power, that men have both need and demonstrated capacity to lift themselves. Like other higher animals men must concern themselves with food and other physical wants and protect themselves and their broods from bodily harm; but social man has already gone far in creating a world of other satisfactions and attainments which make life worthwhile.

The actual problems of life differ in kind in youth and maturity. For youth those problems are highly individual; for worthy adults they are largely societal. The teen-ager is loosely vagabond, with personality in the making, and with niche in society quite uncertain. Grown-ups divide into those who never attain useful maturity and those who productively accept social responsibilities. The value of the individual to society usually depends heavily upon his education—formal and informal—and the problem of the nation therefore is largely that

of providing suitable and adequate education.

The prime problem of the race is to increase its chances for merited earthly survival. It is society that must find the solution, and I believe that solution is likely to be found only by those rarest of peoples who become free to educate, learn how to educate, and educate effectively. An adequate supply of the goods and gadgets of industry seems already assured to civilizations of the future. Questions of economics and politics seem not too difficult for the growing experience of suitably informed peoples. I believe that a most durable peril of the race is its own rapid rate of reproduction as now linked to a limited food supply and to social unreadiness to curb it; that this is a breeder of poverty, aggression, communism and war; that this peril is sustained powerfully by both religious thought and biological instinct.

I believe that the difficulties, uncertainties and fragility of life are surpassed by its offerings; that decency, mental freedom, justice and an ever-improving social order should be always the goal of all; that helpfulness, courage, understanding, fellowship and unselfishness are the keys to success in attaining that goal. With philosopher John Dewey I believe that "Men have never fully used the powers they possess to advance the good in life, because they have waited upon some power external to themselves to do the work they are responsible for doing." I believe that the further advance of social man would be best and most surely attained through a complete abandonment of ideas of God or gods by those who lead the superior societies of their day.

Each of the several fine intangibles which, through thought or feeling, enter into the good life is complicated enough without a gratuitous immersion in unreality, doubt and transcendency. Among literate folk ethics is better served by clear comprehension than by supernatural cloak or command. For far too long mankind has looked upon creatures, hill or sky only to invent and declare a god. Advanced peoples may now enjoy a comprehension of the *natural* origin of Earth and Man. Such peoples may now fully claim their immense inheritance, along with total responsibility for whatever persons and societies make of themselves. The most amazing story of the universe—and its

earlier top secret—is that of our own slow and portentous arrival. The most meaningful truth concerning mankind is that associated human beings gradually create the actual world in which they live.

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THE WIDE, WIDE MOVEMENT

All organizations are urged to send in their news, programs, activities, elections, socials, past or future, and pictures of meetings, officers or members, or anything of interest to Rationalists.

• FOREIGN NEWS

A fine example of international cooperation occurred recently when the NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY of England sent 20 pounds (about \$56.80) to the INDIAN RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION of Madras, India, to help out during a financial difficulty. The Indian society was very grateful for the aid but added that the goodwill expressed was worth twenty millions. THE INDIAN RATIONALIST, monthly journal of the IRA, has announced that its fifth annual convention will be held in Bombay.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY has twenty branch organizations in England with about seven new branches in the act of formation. Some of their organizations have daily programs and many give weekly lectures, both indoor and outdoor. Announcements appear in their journal THE FREETHINKER, the only Freethought paper published weekly. It celebrates its 75th anniversary this year. The N.S.S. was asked to provide a speaker to declare himself an atheist for a short B.B.C. Television program. Mr. Colin McCall, General Secretary, has recorded the program. The society is considering sending traveling speakers around England.

Mr. Joseph Reeves, M.P., chairman of the RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION of England, speaking as a member of the Council of the Ethical Union of England addressed the members on his views on integration of the RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION and the ETHICAL UNION. He said that the two movements were closer today than they had ever been. He thought the legal and other difficulties could be overcome and hoped a committee might be appointed to examine the question. The suggestion was accepted unanimously by the Council.

The RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF JOHANNESBURG (South Africa) has started a study group for members and friends once a month. Their regular meetings are held in the Johannesburg public library each month. A recent lecture was on "The teaching of religion should be abolished in provincial schools." The association is to hold a book sale soon. They publish a monthly mimeographed paper called *The Rationalist*. A recent debate was held on the subject "That the quest for the supernatural is futile and should be abandoned." This involved two members of the Rationalist Association and two from the Society for Psychic Advancement.

With the cooperation of the Socialist-Liberal government in Belgium, the Humanists have succeeded in establishing courses in secular ethics and in all public high schools as alternate to the courses on religion. Parents are required to choose either secular ethics or religion for their children. The same system will be provided for primary schools.

The GERMAN FREETHINKERS' ASSOCIATION, which recently announced its 50th anniversary has a membership of over 5500 in the Federal Republic. Before the war they had the largest membership in the world, 660,000. In the 1950 census of West Germany and West Berlin 1.8 million people declared themselves as freethinkers or free-religious. The largest organization in West Germany is the Bund Freireligiöser Gemeinden Deutschlands (Federation of Free Religious Communities) which believes in "religiosity without dogma, morality without hope of a reward, a conception of the world without miracles, and a philosophy capable of development." The organizations of the bund are incorporated and have the rights of a church, are entitled to receive government subsidies and perform social ceremonies such as marriages. There is also the Deutscher Volksbund für Geistesfreiheit (German Union for Freedom of Thought).

In Holland the Humanists have gained 10,000 members since the war. The Humanist Verbond has established a humanist Family Welfare Center, a children's home and a soldier's recreation center, as well as a vacation and conference place. Efforts are being made to have Humanist chaplains for the armed forces.

In Norway there is the Association for Civil Confirmation, whose main activity is to arrange a confirmation ceremony for youngsters who do not want to attend the ceremony of the Catholic Church. Its philosophy has been called "Humanethics."

A new Mexican Freethought journal *La Voz de Juarez* has appeared which is militantly anti-clerical.

Congratulations to the RADICAL HUMANIST publication of India which celebrated its 19th anniversary on April 7th, 1956.

A Nigerian Humanist Association was formed at Igbodi, Yaba, Nigeria.

• AMERICAN NEWS

The Philadelphia Thomas Paine Center is no longer a dream but a reality. At the May meeting of the FRIENDSHIP LIBERAL LEAGUE a decision was made to proceed to purchase property for a center of Freethought.

The decision had been held up whether to use the building fund of \$8,000 on a building now or to wait until later for a larger building. All voted to go ahead and the option was placed on a building not to exceed \$20,000. The building selected is three stories, originally a dwelling but with the first floor converted into a store front and extended twenty feet to the building line.

It is expected that the store will be used for a book store for the League. Also on the first floor with the store will be room for business meetings of the league and for a reading room. The two upper floors may be used for League offices and a meeting room for the forum, with guest rooms for visiting members and friends on the third floor. The League will have plenty of room for its 2,000 volume library and for space to mail out their publication, *The Liberal*.

Their problem now is to get a mortgage for the remaining \$12,000 needed. The League does not intend to establish a pleasant and comfortable club house for leisure hours. They earnestly hope to form a business headquarters for the League's activities . . . a utilitarian plant for the dissemination of scientific knowledge and the Rationalist view of nature.

The FRIENDSHIP LIBERAL LEAGUE will deserve and need help for their project. This will make the fourth Rationalist organization to own their own building, adding Philadelphia to Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Louis.

The THOMAS PAINE NATIONAL HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION of New Rochelle, New York, had its annual election of officers. A wreath was placed on the Paine Monument on his birthday.

The FREISINNIGE GEMEINDE of Chicago held three lectures during the past season and a basket picnic will be held on July First at the garden of Fred Albers of Bensenville, Illinois. The society meets every fourth Sunday at 2:00 p.m. at 2403 W. North Avenue, Chicago. The new officers elected recently were Joseph Braun, Chairman; Herman Burghardt, Vice-Chairman; Joseph Schlesinger, Secretary; Fred Alber, Financial Secretary; Henry Lohens,

Treasurer and Trustees Fred Frese, Hugo Weidelt and Herman Burghardt.

The AMERICAN RATIONALIST FEDERATION sent a protest to senators and congressmen regarding the proposed new national motto "In God We Trust." Several internal bulletins have been sent to member groups as well as the beginning of a series of news releases, which goes to Freethought magazines and papers. Contact has been made with several foreign organizations. The federation is searching for individuals to help organize their areas. A national organizer will be appointed to keep in contact with many persons who have shown an interest in starting organizations. Nine organizations are charter members of the new federation. A convention will be held in St. Louis in October.

The FREIE GEMEINDE of St. Louis is planning on having a larger number of lectures for its next season. They will invite out-of-town speakers, one of whom is Heinrich Bartel of the Freie Gemeinde of Milwaukee. The St. Louis organization spent \$2,000 on repairs and improvements on its building which is used for meetings of four Freethought groups in St. Louis, the Freie Gemeinde, the American Rationalist Federation, Rationalist Publications and the Rationalist Society of St. Louis. A recent lecture that resulted in a good attendance was a talk on the Catholic Church by Dr. Anthony Caliendo, a Protestant minister who had been ejected from Italy due to his work with ex-priests there. He is scheduled to return to his mission in Italy soon.

The programs of the RATIONALIST SOCIETY of St. Louis included a talk by an attorney from the American Civil Liberties Union, on the ACLU, a lecture by Theo. W. Lentz on his book *Towards a Science of Peace*, a talk by Sam Hill on *Jesus, Socialist or Savior?* and Walter Hoops spoke on *The Devil*. The last talk of the season was by the out-going chairman James Kaigler on *More Like God*. In eight years this organization has grown to be one of the largest in the movement and has elected seven instead of the usual five officers to keep up with expanding work. Officers elected were Eugene Hoffman, Chairman; James M. Kaigler, Vice-Chairman; Norma Scholl, Financial Secretary; Eldon Scholl, Corresponding Secretary, Beatrice Gmerek, Recording Secretary; Arnold Safron, Librarian; and Era Hunter, a director on the board. It was the first time any women were elected to the board and then three were chosen. The Rationalist Society gave an annual Spring social and barbeque at the home of the Meiers, about 20 miles from St. Louis. An afternoon of horse shoes and croquet and badminton with

informal discussions was topped off with some planned entertainment in the evening after the barbeque. The Society has a meeting every Wednesday evening in the Freie Gemeinde Building, 2218 St. Louis Avenue.

Congratulations to the AMERICAN ETHICAL UNION in their change of format of the magazine THE STANDARD, now printed beautifully and re-named the ETHICAL OUTLOOK.

After sixteen years as editor of THE HUMANIST, Edwin H. Wilson is succeeded by Priscilla Robertson. Mr. Wilson will now have more time to devote to the AMERICAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION as Executive Director. Mr. Wilson began his work in Humanism as a columnist for *The New Humanist*, in 1928, later as managing editor of THE HUMANIST in 1930.

The FREIE GEMEINDE of Milwaukee had several interesting programs in May, a lecture by Dr. Siegfried Mark of Roosevelt University of Chicago on *Reason's Struggle in the 20th Century*, a movie on *Wisconsin Folkways and Byways*, and a movie on *Adventure in Africa*. They will have a picnic on July 8th in Lincoln Park.

The annual convention of the UNITED SECULARISTS OF AMERICA will be held in August in New York instead of Duluth as decided at its last convention.

The JEFFERSON FREETHOUGHT SOCIETY, the English speaking section of the famous FREIE GEMEINDE of Milwaukee, at its annual meeting in the club room on April 12th, decided on a change in policy as regards its future operations. Hitherto, it has promoted a twice-a-month lecture course throughout the season. Beginning this fall, it will offer only one lecture a month. The other night will be devoted to a round-table discussion and get-together. It is felt that this will enable the membership to become better acquainted with each other, and work to the advantage of the society.

All old officers were unanimously reelected for another year. The Jefferson Society is one of our more active groups. It has the good fortune to be affiliated with the GEMEINDE, which owns Jefferson Hall, a large building equipped with many meeting rooms, bowling alleys, a large stage, and other facilities. Elmer Johnson, Pres., and Henry Watt, Sec., are well known freethinkers, having taken a very active part in helping organize our great democratic American Rationalist Federation.

THE PIONEERS OF INDEPENDENT THOUGHT of the CRFA hold their regular meetings every second Sunday of the month in T. G. Masaryk Freethinkers School Building

in Cicero, Illinois. In May they sponsored a theatre party. Twenty members attended the splendid stage play in which Melvyn Douglas starred, "Inherit the Wind". Meetings are always interesting, for, timely lectures and discussions are the main features besides other cultural activities. Besides playing an important role in the CRFA, the "Pioneers" are affiliated with the American Rationalist Federation when this Federation was formed last winter. Visitors are always welcome.

WEST COAST FREETHINKERS HOME

A Freethinkers old folks home has often been talked about but never accomplished. One has been started in San Diego near the well known Balboa Park and close to libraries and other conveniences.

For those who do not want to spend their lives in religious institutions or in boarding houses this home is available in one of the best climates for elderly persons.

Facilities are limited now although openings are still available and additional facilities may be obtainable if the one building is filled. Quiet, sociable, non-drinkers are preferred who can take care of their own rooms. Only men will be accepted.

Applications are being taken for a steward to take care of the property in exchange for free living quarters.

For further information write to James Hervey Johnson, P.O. Box 2832, San Diego 12, California.

AMERICAN RATIONALIST FEDERATION

With the affiliation of the League for Religious Freedom of New York and the Freie Gemeinde of St. Louis, the youngest as well as the oldest freethought societies in America have joined forces with the American Rationalist Federation. Our New York Friends changed their former name which caused confusion with POAU. At its first meeting it adopted a statement of principles and a resolution setting forth its position about the teaching of religion along strictly orthodox lines of what is called "moral and spiritual values".

The Freie Gemeinde of St. Louis was founded in 1850 growing out of an earlier organization in Hermann, Mo. which started in 1837. The Freie Gemeinde has played during its long existence an important part in the intellectual life of St. Louis and Missouri. It will be remembered that the Freie Gemeinde was host to the International Congress for Progressive Thought and the 27th Annual Congress of the American Secular Union and Freethought Federation in 1904. Among the prominent speakers at that occasion were: Jayaputra Grairo of India, Philip Rappaport, Judge C. B. Waite, E. M. MacDonald and Dr.

Roberts. Ernst Haeckel, foremost European proponent of evolution and famous writer on scientific and freethought subjects (Riddle of the Universe, Wonders of Life, and others) sent to this Congress, his famous 30 theses towards a monistic concept of the world.

The nine charter member groups of the American Rationalist Federation are: Freisinnige Gemeinde of Chicago, Freie Gemeinde of Milwaukee, Jefferson Freethought Society of Milwaukee, Pioneers of Independent Thought of Chicago, Czech Rationalist Federation of Chicago, Friendship Liberal League of Philadelphia, League for Religious Freedom of New York City, Freie Gemeinde of St. Louis, Rationalist Society of St. Louis.

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INHERIT THE WIND

A PLAY

by

Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee

This is a great historical play, meaningful, cogent, and thought-provoking. The producers have made a fine contribution not only to the Broadway theatre but to the now-embattled American principle of freedom of thought. Every performance is jammed, and on weekends one finds standing room only.

That Paul Muni has the lead role in a play of such significance is a stroke of good fortune for all who take freedom seriously. His portrayal of Clarence Darrow is magnificent. Muni is a dynamic, powerful actor and, in my opinion, his artistry is beyond praise. His grey hair wild, pot-belly thrust forward in a slow rolling shuffle, he stares through old-fashioned gold-rimmed spectacles at a world whose foolishness he views with mild wonderment and good-natured tolerance.

Bertram Cates (Karl Light) is on trial in Dayton, Tenn. for "teaching atheism"—actually, for introducing Darwin's theory of evolution to his students.

Henry L. Mencken (Tony Randall), the smart-aleck, glib-tongued, cynical young reporter for the Baltimore Herald, characterizes the general architecture of the scene on the stage as a "melange of Moorish and Metho-

dist." It is the typical Main Street of a typical American village through which the townsfolk saunter, many holding aloft signs bearing such slogans as "My Ancestors Ain't Apes," and all vowing to run the heretic out of town.

Into this hubbub comes the Public Prosecutor, the famous theologian William Jennings Bryan (Ed Begley), who is presented with a key to the town and a citation as Honorary Colonel in the State Militia. Excitement is running high until Mencken announces that the defense has engaged Clarence Darrow (Paul Muni). His name electrifies the group and they burst out venomously with: "Agnostic!" "Atheist!" "Agent of Darkness!" "Creature of the Devil!" But, still defiant and hopeful, they sing, "The Old-Time Religion . . . is good enough for me!" as they slowly leave the stage.

Suitcase in hand, Darrow arrives and views his surroundings with misgivings. The wise-cracking Mencken, anxious to make friends with the great Clarence Darrow, throws his arm about his shoulders and assures Darrow that although he "might be rancid butter" he's "on Darrow's side of the bread," . . . and Darrow tolerates him.

The criterion for serving on the jury is a belief in the Bible and a contempt for "learning." Young Cates finds depressing the character of the jury which has obviously already pre-judged him guilty, yet all were his one-time friends. Darrow morosely admits that to stand up courageously for a principle is not easy and that "sometimes when you're walking down an empty street listening to the sound of your own footsteps, with all doors closed against you, you're not sure whether you're walking away from something or towards it."

At the trial, Darrow introduces as evidence Darwin's *Origin of Species*, but Bryan objects: "A man, not a book, is on trial." Darrow retaliates, "The right to think is on trial . . . a thinking man is on trial because he chooses to think!"

Darrow's witnesses, "fifteen noted scientists, the great thinkers of our time," were not permitted to take the stand on the ground of "irrelevance." Darrow, left without any witnesses, calls Bryan to the stand! Although shocked, he defiantly mounts the stand, secure

in his belief that faith conquers all. He testifies that he is an expert on the Bible and accepts everything in it as gospel truth; has never read the *Origin of Species* and never will; believes implicitly the story of Joshua and the sun. Darrow points out the dire consequences if the latter catastrophe should ever occur, citing Copernicus, but Bryan shrugs his shoulders and pshaw away scientific facts.

Bryan's obvious ignorance and dogmatic obstinacy are apparent even to the spectators as Darrow throws questions at him; he elicits from Bryan only inept stammering or shocked silence or a reiteration of his steadfast belief in the Bible. The spectators' disappointment in their fallen idol is too much to bear. Their audible contempt for Bryan's evasive "answers" to Darrow's pointed questions erupt into a crescendo of disapproval, until finally the hearing breaks up in pandemonium. Darrow's astuteness has made Bryan a laughing stock, and Darrow scores a victory!

Although the jury returns a verdict of guilty, the Judge pronounces a light sentence. Bryan is furious that Cates is let off so easily; he mounts a table and attempts to read a prepared statement, but the general uproar drowns out his words. The townsfolk ignore him, and he finally abandons his text and, in a final attempt to regain his lost prestige, hysterically begins a recitation of the Books of the Bible, in the midst of which he collapses, is carried off stage, and later dies.

Darrow, saddened at the news, tells the cynical Mencken: "Bryan had the same right to his opinions as Cates does. There was greatness in that man! A giant once lived in his body (but he) got lost because he was looking for God too high up and too far away, for 'he that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind, and the fool shall be servant to the wise in heart.'"

F. van S.

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DEVIL IN THE FLESH. In London, Harold Allen, 36, explained to police that he was acting solely at the prompting of a "voice" when he angrily threw open the door of a confessional in Westminster Cathedral and punched Father Edward Bushbey in the eye.

Life with a Purpose

by LORD CHORLEY

The Chairman of TVA seeks a meaning
in life

I am always fascinated by the attempts of men of action to grapple with the problems of religion and the meaning of existence, which is, I think, at the heart of all worthwhile religious thought. Such men tend to be too much taken up with doing things to be able to find the necessary time for thinking things out and their reflections are apt to be rather jejune, and they are usually found to be doing little more than fitting themselves into the pattern of orthodoxy fixed by the traditions in which they grew up. But from time to time this rule is broken by a noteworthy exception and then we usually get something which, to me at any rate, is worth far more than the outpourings of the professional theologians and metaphysicians. Such a case is *Search for Purpose*, by Arthur E. Morgan, published recently in the USA by the Antioch Press. It will appeal to those who are still fond of their Emerson; those for whom that philosopher is *vieux jeu* will throw it away.

SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Mr. Morgan belongs to a type to which in many ways he hardly conforms—a type which is particularly beloved by the great American public—that of the hero who has risen from the smallest beginnings to the top of his profession entirely by his own exertions and abilities. One of the leading engineers of his generation, he finished his active career as Chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority. This book is, in part at least, his spiritual autobiography. Born into a family in which the father was a somewhat indolent non-believer and the mother a fine, hardworking character of narrow orthodox belief, he began in early boyhood to be puzzled by these contrasting patterns of life, and was stimulated into 'intense and sustained' efforts to get to the bottom of the problem which they posed for him. Thus during the whole period that he was building his successful professional career he was meditating on the accepted religious orthodoxies, observing acutely their value both as incentives to con-

duct and as explanations of the problem of existence, and building up a system of beliefs for himself. *Search for Purpose* is a narrative of this adventure, and it is one to which Mr. Morgan brings a frankness of mind and honesty of outlook which cannot but endear him to the reader. The book reminds me of Gandhi's equally frank autobiography, but Mr. Morgan is here concerned, for the most part, with his personal religious problem, not with the intimate personality problems which so much occupied the Indian statesman.

Mr. Morgan's wide experience has taught him that 'in the long run men give their supreme loyalties to over-all patterns of life, to those ideas and attitudes concerning the nature of the world and of life which provide them with incentive and direction for living'. These are, of course, what we compendiously describe as their religion. Such patterns are normally traditional. For long periods those existing in a particular community may satisfy its requirements, but from time to time the changes effected in the society by the external forces may make them no longer satisfying, and call for basic reconstruction. Thus in the conditions of the modern world, Mr. Morgan finds that 'there are vast and vital issues pressing on us today concerning which Christian teaching provides no direction'. We have therefore to make a supreme effort to free ourselves from this tradition, an effort which 'few persons even among the erudite and mentally disciplined' are able to make, so as 'to have a first-hand view of life'.

DIFFERING BELIEFS

It is not surprising that young Morgan followed his mother into the Baptist Church as a boy. Nor that, before long, with his intellect burgeoning he should have begun to find the fundamentalism of that faith incompatible with a growing conviction in the truth and importance of the theory of evolution. Looking round among the other citizens of the small town in which he lived, he found that some other sects did not find it so difficult to accept such scientific doctrines, and so was driven to ask himself why do groups of outwardly quite similar people have such differing beliefs. The conclusion in such surroundings was not diffi-

cult to draw: it is because they accepted the beliefs of those among whom they grew up. After this it was not long before he decided that he must make his own inquiries and his own decisions as to what he could honestly accept; and in the end he arrived at a position which I think is most accurately described as that of a rationalist.

In the process of this inquiry, which is described in a short but important chapter of his book, Mr. Morgan went through an evolution which is not uncommon, in the course of which his thought processes were much the same as those of many of us. The character of his thinking, however, had the quality which no doubt contributed to his success as an engineer—that of clarity. Thus he appreciated the comfort and indeed courage which her faith gave to his mother, but he saw, too, that it put her mind to sleep and formed an effective barrier against the search for truth. Moreover, the acceptance of such a belief had made her a partisan seeking to sustain it by 'emotional commitment'. At such a point a really effective search for truth will stop, and young Morgan realized that 'a critical attitude is a fundamental ethical obligation' in that search.

SOME INHERENT WORTH

Nevertheless, he realized that such a faith as his mother's was not without its value, and that any belief which has been held by a large number of people through a long period of time is likely to have inherent worth. **He did not therefore turn himself into the opposite extreme of a violent anti-religious attitude, and confesses that he has often been repelled by 'the prejudice and venom' which he has found in anti-religious books. Such enthusiasm, whether for or against, is likely 'to outrun wisdom and judgment, sometimes with a great waste of human resources'.**

What he felt he needed was a pattern of conviction which would be in accord with modern scientific knowledge, and which would provide a purpose for a life's work which could be measured in terms of real value. To be in accord with modern knowledge he must start with the understanding that man is an animal; to achieve a purpose of value he needed a be-

lief in man as something more than an animal, a human being whose objective must be to live according to some purpose which both satisfies and transcends his biological needs.

Thus, as he set out on his successful career as an engineer, Mr. Morgan carried with him a design for living—a design rather than a blueprint. I say this because his outlook was intensely empirical, and the pattern of life which he was seeking could only be found by living, though living in accordance with a purpose. This problem then was to find the purpose which would make life really worth while, and the book, written towards the end of the journey, recounts the trials and the errors, and tells us something of what he eventually concluded that purpose should be.

JUVENILE STANDARDS

I have found this *Odyssey* fascinating and could wish that space permitted comment upon all the various stages so attractively recounted. The method of approach which I have indicated is particularly valuable when handling the vexed topic of ethics which, to such a man as Mr. Morgan, is a landmark of great importance in the search. Here again, the problem for him has been to form a just appreciation as to which out of those ethical rules and doctrines which we derive from the past he could select as viable in the modern world. So much of morality comes in almost with the mother's milk, and since our early dependence on parents tends to fix for life the structure of personality then built up, we are faced with a dilemma at the stage when the needs of an adult existence confront us with the inadequacy of these juvenile ethical standards. Mr. Morgan concludes that one of the greatest hindrances to the American people arriving at a full and mature democracy is the fact that they find it so difficult to wean themselves of their craving for a super-parent on whom to lean. And the astonishing Eisenhower mystique certainly gives strong support to this comment.

At the same time, Mr. Morgan finds in rationalist ethical standards civilization's principal discovery, not only for preserving the community, but for enabling it to make rapid progress. They should enable the society which is capable of adopting them to outstrip a society which progresses by the slow road of

natural selection, for they 'aim directly at ends which can be seen by intelligence'.

It will be evident that Mr. Morgan's scheme of values is naturalistic not transcendent. Whatever helps to a fuller experience of life is to him a value, and he finds that 'much of the wisdom of life consists in understanding the relative value of things'. Since he has been unable after long and anxious search to find evidence of conscious purpose in Nature, he has been forced to the conclusion that man must take advantage of the natural phenomena of Nature to create his own values, and this is in reality what he has done, since even the values existing in religion itself are found on investigation to be man-made.

To the believer, of course, a life so deprived of transcendental purpose becomes empty and of no value, and there is no incentive to action. But Mr. Morgan is convinced that both clear thinking and experience of life demonstrate the falseness of such a view. A humanistic philosophy can give life a richer purpose than a transcendental one, and incentive does not cease with the abandonment of old beliefs. Indeed, 'incentives are greatly affected by conditioning' and one of the great truths of life is that, given the seed of a motive to achieve significance for one's life, 'a man can remake his motives or incentives according to the best and largest pattern he can conceive.' 'Loyalty to the adventure of life' will enable him to see life more in the round and to fit his own small personal share of it into the larger life of humanity and to subordinate his craving for personal achievement and perpetuation in a search for enduring values for the success of mankind.

—from *Literary Guide*

A LETTER FROM MILWAUKEE

The initial issue of the *American Rationalist* is an outstanding example of what can be done in producing a remarkable rationalist periodical. Of course our editorial staff is not going to rest on its laurels, but will strive to make each issue better than the last. Let us encourage them by sending in our subscriptions at once—today, not tomorrow. The editors and the management are working hard and making sacrifices to make this the world's best. Let us support them wholeheartedly, and thus insure long life and prosperity to this great venture.

Elmer Johnson

FROM OUR MAIL BOX

Excerpts from letters:

Enjoyed your new and first copy very much and hope that it will grow from a new born baby into a GIANT.

Harry Pfeiffer, Chicago

Your AR is perfect and colorful. It is a pleasure to read.

Dr. Brodzeller, Milwaukee

I am delighted with the newborn magazine, AR. It promises much to the Rationalist cause in this country.

Dr. Oscar Riddle, Florida

Congratulations and best wishes for success and progress.

Richard Wessel, Chicago

Congratulations! At last a periodical one need not be ashamed of writing for. We are very enthusiastic about it.

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Geyer, Milwaukee

I am well pleased with the first issue of AR.

Robert D. Mullen, Toledo

It was refreshing to see a NEW approach to stimulate the movement of Freethinking in this day of the KEPT PRESS.

Harry Sauter, Alaska

I think the AR is just what we needed.

Mrs. L. H. Michelson, Norfolk, Nebr.

Thanks for inviting me to "enter" your "esteemed" family.

Ed H. Puchta, Wauwatosa, Wisc.

AR is really pleasant reading as well as instructive. Its make up is unique, the papers very pleasing to the eye as well as touch. The printing is all that could be asked for, being most clear, making reading very easy, especially to us 70 and 80 years young whippersnappers.

Chas. A. Francis, Coulter, Pa.

My sincerest wishes for steady growth and an ever increasing national and world-wide recognition.

Hermann Geissler, New Hampshire

AR is an EYE-OPENER.

A. N. Proffit, Springfield, Mo.

May you have a large list of subscribers. AR is informative.

E. Shumbris, New York

I found AR very much to the point on the subject.

G. Smith, Michigan

I already subscribe to 14 magazines . . . but yours is so good that I simply MUST have it.

M. MacTavish, Canada

Congratulations on not only an informative publication but an attractive one.

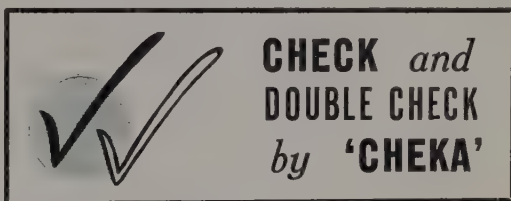
B. McConkey, Sioux Falls

Success and long life to positive and constructive action in the cause of Rationalism.

H. E. Bailey, New York

I like the format and the style (and) predict a great future.

J. P. Mitchell, Florida



Thank You, Friends!

Well folks, here we are, presenting the second issue of the AMERICAN RATIONALIST. At this time we want to thank the hundreds of Rationalists, Freethinkers, Humanists, Atheists for writing to us commending us on the first issue of the AR, its appearance, its contents, its arrangement. Hundreds of you sent in greetings, which appear in this issue . . . just look them over, if you please. AND HUNDREDS OF THEM SENT IN THEIR SUBSCRIPTIONS. Thanks to all of you again. We, that are grouped around our newborn baby, promise you that we will bring up the little "tyke" so he will become the foremost spokesman, bold and unafraid for our ever-growing Rationalist family. To this we all pledge ourselves.

Check and Double Check

I bet you all wonder why the above title for this column. Really, this column is written for the purpose of acquainting our readers with all the activities around our magazine. Regular periodical meetings are being held, plans are being made and directives are given to all of our activists. In this column we will "check and double check" on all our decisions, what was done and what is yet to be done. If anyone has a right to know what is happening around the magazine, then the reader is the first one that should be told. So, these lines are dedicated to our readers and my sincere wish is that they will bring the publishers, the leadership of the Rationalist movement closer to the rank and file, and make it possible for the *American Rationalist* to play an important

part in every American Freethinker's household.

Get Your Books Thru AR

Our readers are urged to check our book list. Also, read the book reviews in every issue as a guide to your book purchases. We recommend that you always order your book needs from the latest issue of the magazine, that way you will be able to get the best service. You will not order books that are taken off the market and that way will save time and money as well.

Organizations, Please Note

The policy of the *American Rationalist* is to promote Rationalism in America and therefore play an important instrument in this role. Our pages are always open to any organization with such ideals. We urge all organized groups to use the AR for their organizational purposes, in building their societies and clubs. Never will the AR be an instrument, or used as such to promote factional fights. We urge the readers of the AR to join a Rationalist organization nearest their home (see list of societies on another page of this issue) regardless of their national affiliation. After all, we want to build, not destroy . . . hmm, that sounds like our Mr. Hewson's "Positive Approach" . . . I like that. By listing the names of organizations and when they meet and where, doesn't necessarily put them in the fold of various national groups. We just want to tell America that such and such an organization exists and where. Can we help you build your organization?



MAN THE MEASURE—

by ERICH KAHLER

"Man the Measure" asks the question:

"What is man and what is his function—A question behind which lies another: Is there a human quality, or are men, assuming themselves to be a more highly developed form of beast, to develop beastliness to ever higher forms? Are men bound together by the ties assumed by Christianity, or by a common nature.

More Thanks

So we don't forget, we want to thank all the friends that sent us names and addresses so we could mail them the AR. Our office was buried under the avalanche of such letters, and of course we didn't mind. In fact we enjoyed it very much. Thanks. Dear friends, just keep sending us more names and addresses and before long the AR family will increase by leaps and bounds.

Impressed!

I was much impressed by the maturity of thought and clarity of expression in "God's Coattails" and was surprised to learn it was the work of a young college student. If you haven't read it as yet, don't miss it!

In Conclusion . . .

When starting on our issue number two, we thought it would be a cinch, but believe you us, trying to decide what articles or items to leave out of the magazine is not so easy. Especially, when you have so much material and you know that all of it should "go". So, it is possible for us to say that the September issue of the AMERICAN RATIONALIST will be another humdinger, so, if you didn't subscribe to this wonderful piece of literature, remember that it costs only two bucks for a whole year. get yourself an envelope, put the "two-spot" in it and send it with your name and address to the AMERICAN RATIONALIST, 2218 St. Louis Ave., St. Louis, Mo. Make sure you will not miss a single issue.

Checking out . . . until September . . .
victor cejka

In addition to the books reviewed and listed in this issue we can supply any book published in the USA and abroad. We can also handle your magazine subscriptions.

This is a service for our readers; any operating surplus will be used for the benefit of the "American Rationalist".

Make your checks, money orders, etc., payable to "Book Service, American Rationalist" and send them with your order to 2218 St. Louis Ave., St. Louis 6, Mo.

He traces man from animal tribal instincts, gradually evolving through the ages to now.

Erich Kahler is a native of Prague, Czechoslovakia. There he studied philosophy, history, sociology, and literature. Having lived in many parts of Europe, he was, in 1933, deprived of his German citizenship and dispossessed of his German home. He lived in Switzerland thereafter, came to the United States in 1938, and is now a citizen. In 1941-2, he lectured at the New School for Social Research in New York on the history of mankind and is now Pro-

fessor at Cornell University. He is also a member of the Committee to Frame a World Constitution at the University of Chicago.

In the first four hundred pages of the book, the groundwork is laid for the actual message that Mr. Kahler seeks to impart, the fusion of the past with the present, and the resulting chaos that we find ourselves in today.

This is no tirade against orthodox religion. The thoughts and deep insight displayed, are very worthy of a fine, discriminating and logically analytical mind.

In the very first pagan religion was a crude concept in the undeveloped mind of man, gradually evolving through into Christianity, where in the schism developed by Luther, man found that he could be both a secular and spiritual being. The groundwork for socialism was laid by the Anabaptists. Collectivism has always been a part of man, and has developed gradually in different stages and under a different guise to its present day form. This history destroys the illusion that Karl Marx was the actual father of Communism. He just added a phase at a later date, and that phase has not proven itself.

Chapters of highlight, although one finds it difficult to discriminate in this fashion, are on America and the Arts. The last two hundred and forty pages should be required reading in school and for adult education. The book could also be used as a source book for specialized reading of history.

It is a book for and of today. The ordinary layman and the lazy reader, will discover enough knowledge to give him conversation far into the future.

The method of shuffling periods back and forth in the first four hundred pages of the book: for example; in discussing the period of Luther and suddenly reverting back for an illustration to a period B.C. is done with much facility, but the ordinary reader might tend to become somewhat confused. This would be the only real criticism to offer, if the book is really intended for the average reading public.

I highly recommend "Man the Measure" for your earnest consideration. A courageous challenge for the perpetuation of the individual intelligent human beings, whose thoughts,

motives and positive actions will mold the destiny of ours and future generations, that it certainly is.

Beatrice C. Berg.

Towards a Science of Peace

by THEO. F. LENTZ

The followers of a certain negro prophet used to chant at every possible opportunity: Peace, it is wonderful. Everybody is for peace. It is like love and motherhood — who could dare to be against it? Peace seems to have friends and supporters everywhere. Even those who secretly prepare for war and practice aggression wherever an opportunity offers itself, are always proclaiming peace, circulate peace petitions, stage huge peace congresses and even use the symbol of the dove to lure the innocents. The old slogan that he who wants peace must prepare for war is still very much alive today. We have seen lately an example of this extremely dangerous policy in the "brink of war" article, ballyhooed by "Il Luce", as the owner of a string of highly successful magazines is known by his underlings.

On the other side of the picture we have the "War Resisters", the believers in "Non-Violence" and the Pacifists who, in a society torn by ideological and economic dissention steadfastly stick to their convictions. They simply refuse to consider a choice between evils: living in "peace" under the heel of dictatorial rule or to resist its encroachments on the liberty and freedom we cherish — if need be — by force of arms.

Dr. Theo F. Lentz, Director of the Attitude Research Laboratory of St. Louis and a former associate professor of education at Washington University has contributed an important book to clarify the problems of peace. It surveys the whole field of peace in a modern society, pointing throughout its 190 pages to the relationship between science and peace and calling for the use of scientific methods to establish a peaceful frame of mind in man and by pursuing scientific methods to overcome traditional emotionalism and nationalism to prevent war. He calls for a redirection of our human energies, our ideas and attitudes, our conception of the use of science. Do we really know all there is to

know about peace and can scientific methods be made to work for peace? Dr. Lentz answers these questions and many more in a concise and illuminating manner. He outlines a scientific program for international opinion—attitude research, for exposing the obstacles in the way towards cooperation and understanding. He calls for Peace-Action and a world wide society for the promotion of a Science of Peace.

Victor Hugo said once: Nothing is so powerful as an idea whose time has come. The time for peace has come. Whether peace will be more powerful than the powers of destruction depends upon us and our willingness to work for peace. This book presents a challenge to each and every one of us.

A brilliant introduction by Julius Huxley, former Director General (1946-1948) of Unesco and author of well known books on Biology, Darwin, Heredity, etc. adds materially to the enjoyment of the reader. He closes his remarks with these words: — to the increasing number of people who are no longer satisfied with the world's traditional ideologies, and to all those who are profoundly perturbed by the threat of suicidal war, I recommend Professor Lentz's book.

\$3.25 including handling charges.

Paul Nelson

How the Great Religions Began

by JOSEPH GAER

(paper back edition published by Signet—35c; also published in hard cover edition by Dodd, Mead and Company)

This book is written for young or old—for anyone wishing to learn the origins and teachings of all the great religions throughout the world and how man probably first discovered his gods. It is a must for the Rationalist. The teachings and origins of the following religions are covered: Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedism, the Reformation. The basic teachings, lives of the founders, and how the religions have changed from their founders' original ideas in practically all cases is fully discussed. Of course in a pocket edition of 236 pages there is a limitation on the amount of information available, but enough is given so that the reader will learn quite a bit about

each religion and will be able to intelligently discuss the beliefs of peoples, not of his own culture. Besides being extremely interesting reading, the information is given in simple form and is excellent material for young people or for those wishing a basic knowledge of the religions of the world.

While not written from a Rationalist point of view, it will naturally give the Christian who reads with an open mind, a clear idea of how the great religions began and how futile it is to believe in any of them. N. S.

Fact and Fiction, Secular Poems,

by C. E. RATCLIFFE

This book of 54 pages is by the "happy philosopher" in England who has been a London councillor, a secularist orator (once jailed for a speech he made in Hyde Park), an editor, and a school manager as well as accountant for a railroad. He wrote a compilation of labor songs which sold 11,000.

Now in retirement, the poet-philosopher continues at his task of creation, still writing and publishing. His picture appears in the front of his latest book of poems. In 1951 he published a book of poems under the title *Rhyme and Reason*.

This past president of the Metropolitan Secular Society and organizing secretary of the Hol-loway Ethical Society centers this latest book of poetry on the themes of international friendship, co-operation and Free Thought. Running through much of his verse is the idea that free will is a "pernicious fallacy."

Some of the interesting "secular" poems in his new book are An Atheist's Dream, Prayer, God and Nature and a few on the comic side such as No Laughing Matter and one we can't help from quoting in full:

JONAH AND THE WHALE

*A chap, named Jonah, went to sea,
A voyage to begin.
His ship was wrecked. He, cast ashore,
Soon found a wayside inn.
Three days and nights, he stayed inside,
And then, so runs the tale,
The landlord turned poor Jonah out,
The inn was called: "The Whale."*

"Suggested Standards for Bible Reading"

by H. F. HAAS

The booklet which appears on our book list develops a distinctly new and unique approach to Bible reading.

In it the Bible is not attacked nor is its value depreciated. However, in discussing the reading of it, rationalistic ideas are injected subtly into the text to stimulate the reader toward an evaluation of the Bible realistically.

Read by the orthodox, it is likely to be much more effective in awakening constructive thought that would any out and out attack upon its worth.

It is only interesting to the convinced Rationalist because it will enable him to provide a stepping stone for a retreat from orthodoxy for awakening believers among his friends.

The Editor

Books Received:

FACT AND FICTION (Secular poems) by C. E. Ratcliffe, Strickland Press, Glasgow

A GAME OF CHESS—a Study in Atheism, by Richard Scott, Philosophical Library

CHRISTIANITY — a Critique of Religious Doctrine, by Floyd Lawrence Warne, Philosophical Library

HUMANISM AS A PHILOSOPHY, by Corliss Lamont, Philosophical Library

RUFFVILLE, by William A. Maertz

PEOPLE'S PADRE, by Emmett McLoughlin, Beacon Press

CATHOLIC WORDS AND ACTION, compiled by Raywood Frazier, Heritage Manor

ON THE NATURE OF MAN—an Essay in Primitive Philosophy, by Dagobert D. Runes, Philosophical Library

OF GOD, THE DEVIL AND THE JEWS, by Dagobert D. Runes, Philosophical Library

We have received a number of very interesting publications from our friend Joseph J. Wilson of Chicago, Illinois. These books were issued by the Menace Publishing Company of

Aurora, Missouri, about the turn of the century. We are very happy to have these books and urge all readers not to let their books fall into hands that do not appreciate them. Donate your unwanted books to the research library of the American Rationalist so that valuable and irreplaceable collections do not get lost.

The Monkey's Viewpoint



Three monkeys sat in a cocoanut tree
Discussing things as they're said to be.
Said one to the others, "Now listen, you two,
There's a certain rumor that can't be true,
That man descends from our noble race—
The very idea is a disgrace.
No monkey ever deserted his wife,
Starved her babies and ruined her life,
And you've never known a mother monk
To leave her babies with others to bunk,
Or pass them on from one to another
'Til they scarcely know who is their mother.
And another thing you'll never see—
A monk build a fence 'round a cocoanut tree
And let the cocoanuts go to waste,
Forbidding all other monks a taste;
Why, if I'd put a fence around the tree,
Starvation would force you to steal from me.
Here's another thing a monk won't do—
Go out at night and get on a stew,
Or use a gun or club or knife
To take some other monkey's life,
Yes, Man descended—the ornery cuss—
But, brother, he didn't descend from us!"

—Author Anonymous

“quotus

from the Freethought publications of the world

from THE LIBERAL:

The expansion of Roman power followed enlarged commercial interests, not “manifest destiny.” Imperialism was the ruin of Rome. Although the Romans had almost half as many vices as the pious Christians of the following “Age of Faith,” the collapse was the effect of a material cause: the cracking social and economic structure. Our moralists and preachers experience collective amnesia when anyone reminds them that Christianity became the state religion over seventy years before the Goths sacked Rome in the Fourth century and 155 years before the fall of the Western Empire in 476.

from THE TRUTH SEEKER:

It is a self evident fact that the most difficult things to analyze are the analytical tools themselves. One cannot look through the telescope and see the telescope at the same time. This difficulty is found in the study of mental phenomena. The most wonderful tool of science is the human mind. But it is the mind itself that we would like to study.

from RATIONALIST REVIEW:

Assuming that religion has been a social force which has helped people to be *better* citizens, I had come like many others to wonder what can be used to perform this essential social role when and if religion disappears. If religion has been a social cement, then what do we use to keep the bricks together when the cement is withdrawn? I shall assume for the sake of discussion that all established religions are false in their interpretation of the world and that we shall feel obliged to oppose them on that ground alone. We must further assume that we are dealing with problems in Western society as it actually exists, and not talk of idealized societies. I shall assume that religion has been and indeed still is, although to a diminishing extent, a social force. Also, roughly speaking, I shall assume that there is a genuine problem that has been created by the decrease of religious influence and that all rationalists are under some obligation to try to solve it.

from HUMANIST WORLD DIGEST:

We must take a realistic view of the forces which oppose us and the weapons they employ. We must stop slinking around corners and proudly declare our Humanist beliefs. Liberals are often thought of as being foolish “do-gooders”—and probably are slightly subversive—only because we fail to correct these misconceptions. Above all, we must have faith in ourselves and in our ability to successfully attack the forces of unreason which would toss us back into the stagnant pool from which we have crawled.

from SECULAR SUBJECTS:

It is strange that a people who have developed a system of democracy such as we have in these United States of America continue to work for and look forward to a day when all the people of the world will be subject to supernatural rule.

RATIONALIST ORGANIZATIONS

The purpose of this column is to list all known rationalist, secularist and Freethought organizations that are democratically functioning in their area and which we can recommend to our readers. We like our friends to affiliate with local societies no matter under whose particular auspices they operate.

We are sorry to inform our readers that the Twin City Secularists have asked us to withdraw their name from the list. We complied reluctantly with this wish. It seems to us that Freethought organizations should welcome publicity. Obscurity does not help our cause. Perhaps our friends in St. Paul will think it over; in the meantime we shall continue to refer inquiries from the Twin Cities to the above address.

ARIZONA

ARIZONA SECULARISTS, (U. S. A.), P.O. Box 7271, Phoenix, Arizona.

CALIFORNIA

FREETHINKERS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, Mr. Kolen, 2624 Maple Ave., Los Angeles, California.

Those in San Diego, write San Diego Freethinkers, c/o J. H. Johnson, P.O. Box 2832, San Diego 12, California.

NEW YORK

INGERSOLL FORUM, meets second Friday of month, 8 p.m. at the Pythian, 70th St., east of Broadway, New York City.

LEAGUE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, 20 East 100th St., New York 29, N. Y.

NEW YORK CZECH RATIONALISTS, c/o J. Voboril, 402 East 69th St., New York 21, N. Y.

PHILADELPHIA

FRIENDSHIP LIBERAL LEAGUE, 5526 Westford Road, Philadelphia 20, Pa.

CLEVELAND

CLEVELAND CZECH RATIONALISTS, Anton Belsam, 5149 Fowler, Cleveland 7, Ohio.

INDIANA

MICHIANA LIBERAL LEAGUE, Box 3002, Sta. B, South Bend, Indiana.

MICHIGAN

MICHIGAN LIBERAL LEAGUE, 23034 Donald, East Detroit, Michigan.

MINNESOTA

(see above notice)

ST. LOUIS

RATIONALIST SOCIETY OF ST. LOUIS, 2218 St. Louis Ave., St. Louis 6, Mo.

GERMAN SCHOOL ASS'N. AND FREE COMMUNITY OF N. ST. LOUIS, INC., 2218 St. Louis Ave.

from THE NEW ZEALAND RATIONALIST:

Rationalists should disregard any suggestions that they are wasting time and energy in promoting the cause. If people can be imbued with a desire to think fearlessly and logically, then much will have been done towards bringing about social reform. Rationalism is particularly concerned with cultivating such a desire, and because of that is playing an important part in making this world a happier place in which to live.

from PROGRESSIVE WORLD:

. . . if we are ever to achieve anything worthwhile for secularism we will have to accept "Law, Order, Duty and Restraint, Obedience, Discipline," if we are ever to become useful soldiers in the Army of Liberation.

from THE PLAIN VIEW:

Reason is not a test in the sense of being an infallible faculty ("the god within the mind") or of providing an infallible formula or set of axioms or first principles or an infallible method. Reason is a test in the sense of bringing to what is thought or to what is desired the check of further relevant facts, in so far as possible, of all relevant facts. Reason thus begins and ends with experience, with actual thoughts and desires, which it refines by putting them in question and by bringing further consideration to bear on them. It is not itself outside experience nor is it an appeal or resort to anything outside experience; it is the ordering of experience, in patterns, meanings, orientations, one thing throwing light on another. Experience cannot be other than personal, and reason is itself personal. . . . Reason, then, is only authentic in so far as it is personal (experimental) and candid, continuously open to the test of personal experience.

from THE AGE OF REASON MAGAZINE:

Religion is the clerical rejection of cerebral reflection.

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M. L. ARTHUR, P.O. Box 1144,
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H. L. MENCKEN, in "Treatise on Right and Wrong"

The Abolitionists who raged in the Northern United States between 1831 and 1861, though they could find absolutely nothing against slavery in the Bible, nevertheless set up the doctrine that Yehweh was teetotally (if secretly) opposed to it, and that strange doctrine quickly gained adherents in the churches which gave them ear, and became, in the end, a cardinal article of faith. It was on this ground, in fact, that Yahweh was elected honorary chairman of the Republican National Committee in 1864—a position he still holds.

*

It would be hard to find, in civilized history, a match for the power that thus lies in the hands of the Catholic clergy. Certainly nothing of the sort was visible among the Jews, who kept their priests in subjection and were always willing to listen to amateur theologians, as the case of Jesus exemplifies. . . . But the Popes and their ghostly brethren in descending rank, though they have given up their old claim to direct authority over all temporal rulers and lawmakers, still exercise a complete police power over the faithful in matters of faith and morals, and every effort to modify it has been resisted and put down. One must go to Tibet to find a parallel.

*

But the truth is that the Catholic system is in its very essence inimical to intelligence, and commonly either throttles it or drives it out of the fold.

*

This draconian system (of the Catholic Church), enforced pedantically, would have destroyed itself long ago, for all save the meanest and most abject varieties of men would have found it unendurable. Fortunately for the Church, there have been few attempts to apply its full rigors and all of them, including the

Spanish Inquisition, have been transient. The bonds of the faithful, in normal times, are light ones, and the Catholic is actually much less harassed in his daily life than the Protestant of equal piety. So long as he does not talk too much he may harbor all the doubts he pleases without hearing anything more than polite remonstrances from his confessor—here, indeed, the scandal is much worse than the offense—, and so long as he confesses freely and applies himself to his penances he may commit any imaginable secular crime without losing his rank as a child of God.

•

Youngster to mother: "If God gives us our daily bread and Santa Claus brings the Christmas presents and the stork brings the babies, then what's the use of having Daddy around?"

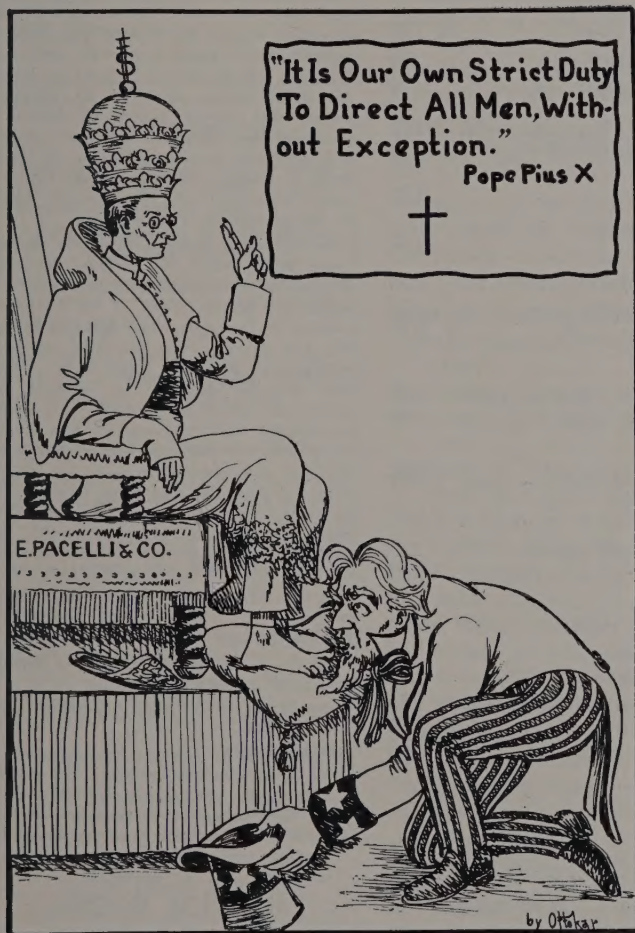
WARNS OF SECTARIANISM AS DANGEROUS POWER

The "real enemy of great religion" is sectarianism, not secularism, the minister of the Unitarian Church of Princeton, N. J., declared in a recent sermon. The Rev. Straughan L. Gettier, continuing, said that it was "a mistake to follow custom in speaking of Russian Communism as an example of secularism," for "its totalitarian form of government and dogmatic ideology make it an outstanding example of sectarianism."

Sectarianism, according to the preacher, is "the special form of idolatry practiced in churches that confuse the goals of their sects with the welfare of mankind, that revere their creeds more than the search for truth," and is "the particular disease of those denominations that have allowed their size, power, or presumptuous claims to blind them to the fact that they remain only a sect in the religious community of the world."

"We need not fear secularism," he added. "It has no organization, no spokesmen and no lobbies. Religious sects do have these powers." Outstanding examples, Gettier stated, were the "churches that try to use their power to gain special privileges and public funds. . . ."

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FREETHOUGHT GEMS FROM MARK TWAIN

A discriminating irreverence is the creator and protector of human liberty. —(*The American Claimant*)

Let me make the superstitions of a nation and I care not who makes its laws or its songs either.

—(*Following the Equator*)

We may not doubt that society in heaven consists mainly of undesirable persons. —(*Mark Twain's Notebooks*)

The Church has opposed every innovation and discovery from the day of Galileo down to our own time, when the use of anesthetics in childbirth was regarded as a sin because it avoided the Biblical curse pronounced against Eve. And every step in astronomy and geology ever taken has been opposed by bigotry and superstition.

—(*Mark Twain's Biography*)

Comments in LOOK on Toynbee's
"Man Owes His Freedom
To God" (Mar. 30th)

... I think Toynbee is in over his head. If man ever finds his freedom it will be through intelligence, which to date he hasn't acquired. — Byron T. Allbaugh, Homeland, Cal.

* * *

... It is certainly a welcome change from much of the arrant nonsense that is being written today in the name of religion and Christianity. Although we are now witnessing what appears to be a religious revival, one need not look far in order to discover that much of our renascent religiousness is not without its ulterior motives. Though we may consider ourselves a "chosen people," our external religiousness is no criterion of interior righteousness. We are not religious because we have put God on our postage stamps, in the pledge to the flag and in political oratory.

Frederick C. Hoyer,
Allatoona Universalist Church,
Allatoona, Ga.

A MEMPHIS man has a family Bible 315 years old. We don't know anything that gets less wear.—*American Lumberman*.

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